



FEDERAL ELECTION COMMISSION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20463

**Remarks of Chair Ann M. Ravel at the
December 17, 2015 Open Meeting of the Federal Election Commission**

I am so happy to be able to highlight some of this year's accomplishments, and also to extend my warmest thanks to the FEC's employees for their work on behalf of the public.

As I have said many times, this agency is incredibly important to our democracy. Every employee here contributes in some way to the public good – whether they work in the Reports Analysis Division, information technology, the Audit Division, the Information Division, or elsewhere. Everyone's efforts to ensure that campaign finance laws are understood and followed, and that the money spent on funding elections is disclosed, foster public trust in the political process.

I want to mention a few people who are emblematic of the great staff here at the FEC:

Dan Petalas agreed to take on the Acting General Counsel position this year. Dan approaches this challenging position in a way that exemplifies what the fine staff here does: he provides fair, balanced advice, and applies the facts to the law in a reasoned way.

The Commission Secretary, Shawn Woodhead Werth, and her deputy, Shelley Garr, work tirelessly to manage a mound of records, circulate ballots, track votes and sit through sometimes excruciating Commission meetings – all with grace and diplomacy.

Darnell Rose in the Administrative Division is a kind and very sweet soul. He is always willing to go above and beyond to help, and is incredibly affirming at the same time.

Press Officer Judy Ingram and Communications Specialist Kathy Carothers go to great lengths to engage and educate the public, the press, and official delegations from foreign countries – among many other groups – about the important work of the FEC.

Our days are always brightened by Ruth Godding, who delivers the daily press clippings as well as newspapers. She is a lovely person who is a pleasure to work with.

Finally, a shout out is in order to Eugene Lynch and Kevin Hancock, who coordinate the FEC softball team. In addition to fielding some outstanding players, their updates on the team's exploits on the field are hilarious. They do a lot to increase camaraderie at the agency.

Morale, as everyone knows, is an issue for us. We need to do more to truly support our staff. Earlier this year, I held an all staff meeting to provide open communication on issues of

concern. I sincerely hope that we can find ways to continue to encourage the great asset the Commission has in its employees.

Of our accomplishments this year, none will have a greater impact than the progress we've made in revamping the FEC website. Ultimately, campaign finance data will be easily accessible so that our trove of information will be available in a meaningful way to the public.

This year we've also made a positive step forward in being less insular, more transparent, and more participatory. We received over 50,000 public comments on matters involving important campaign finance issues. We had a truly public hearing on improving political disclosure and other issues of significance in campaign finance. Dozens of members of the public, including academics and practitioners of campaign finance law, testified before the Commission. It was the first time in FEC history that any member of the public was permitted to come to the Commission in a public meeting and provide their views.

I recognize that not all Commissioners are as focused on the importance of civic engagement as I am. But I hope that the FEC will now view the work we do as relevant not only to our stakeholders, but also to the citizens of this country.

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